

Planning Zoning and Housing Committee  
Of the RTM

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Draft Meeting Minutes

TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
DARIEN CT.

Date: May 2, 2006  
Place: Employee Lounge Town Hall  
Present: Bayne, Conologue, Fingar, Grimes, Magida, Normile, Rycenga, Sickinger, van der Kieft, Young  
Absent: Sheehan, Stark

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Special Meeting of the Planning Zoning and Housing Committee of the RTM.

Meeting was called to order at 8:05 PM.

Minutes of 4-18-06 were submitted and approved.

Guests in attendance included 4 residents of the Allen O'Neill Housing Development.

Announcements

There will be a special meeting of the RTM on May 22 regarding the merging of the New Canaan/Darien Health Districts. Additionally, all town leases must go to mandatory referral after the regularly scheduled RTM Meeting of May 8, therefore these will most likely be on the special meeting agenda as well.

Town Budget

Town Budget will be up for ratification at regularly scheduled meeting of the RTM on May 8. PZH has already discussed the Planning and Zoning budget at some length, but Chairman Young suggested we review with any comments. All comments were positive, highlighting that the GIS has been approved by both the Selectmen and the Board of Finance and appears in the Budget. It was noted that legal fees continue to increase and should be watched in coming years. Perhaps some consideration should be made towards hiring in-house counsel if this area continues to become more costly. PZH will continue to recommend increases in P&Z and EPC fees. PZH will also emphasize the need to enforce RTM ratified ordinance regarding escrow of consultancy fees for large building projects.

Allen O'Neill

Apparently a Building Committee will be formed per the Darien Housing Authority. At the moment this project has not been brought to PZH by the Rules Committee, but Chairman Young feels it is important that we discuss this project. It is felt that this should be a Town project if possible and perhaps someone from the Town Government should sit on the DHA committee if the RTM is to consider budgeting the rest of the pre development funds.

Carly Tankos, a resident of Allen O'Neill, is concerned that when the renovation project is completed, many current residents will not be income eligible to continue living there. Debbie, Jaeger, a resident of Allen O'Neill, pointed out that her understanding regarding CHFA tax credits is that if DHA receives CHFA tax credits, the state has the opportunity to mandate income eligibility guidelines for the project. The more tax credits, the more the state can authorize guidelines. Residents are concerned that the development will become "low income" vs. moderate or affordable income and that many of the current residents' income will be deemed too high to be allowed to live there.

Additionally, as the project is deemed family moderate income, what will happen to the elderly that currently reside there? Although, Allen O'Neill has always been considered family moderate income housing, the DHA has never evicted or moved its senior residents. As of now, they have made no plans to relocate the seniors, but also have not assured them of a place to live.

A discussion ensued as to whether CHFA tax credits can truly change the nature of the housing project. There is concern as to the potential change from moderate income to low income eligibility guidelines. PZH feels that more information is needed as to the type of housing that will be built. Therefore, all agreed that whatever limited control we can have over the redevelopment project, we should try to get. It was pointed out that in the 2/10/06 letter from the DHA to the Board of Selectmen, the DHA definitely presented a case for focusing on a partnership with the Town of Darien in regards to the Allen O'Neill Redevelopment project.

The following amendment was moved and accepted in a vote of 10 in support, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

Amendment to Town of Darien Budget:

The Planning Zoning and Housing Committee of the RTM approves the proposed Town Budget with the following amendment: **The funds identified within the RFCNRE budget on page 177, line item #907415 will only be disbursed upon the formation of a Building Committee by the Darien Housing Authority which shall include appropriate representation from the Planning Zoning and Housing Committee and the Finance and Budget Committee of the RTM.**

Callari Lease

Concerns were raised that the lease is not market rate. Argument could be made that the town is charging a low amount because Callari will clean up parcel. But paving, etc. goes against mandates of the Town Plan of Development. Additionally, concerns that were raised by Public Works Committee of the RTM have not been addressed as of yet. The Committee would like to wait until more information has been received. Presumably the town dump is going to grow not reduce in size therefore it would seem plausible that at some point they might need this space. Due to zoning guidelines, this parcel also falls into a residential category. Finally, there might be some wetlands issue as there is a watercourse and a pond on this parcel.

It was agreed that PZH will meet at 7:30pm on May 22 prior to the special meeting of the RTM to discuss our recommendations.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tamsin Sickinger  
Clerk